

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

LAND CLEARING

(Acre)

Code 460

**DEFINITION**

Removing trees, stumps, and other vegetation from wooded areas.

**PURPOSE**

To achieve needed landuse adjustments and improvements in the interest of soil and water conservation and in keeping with the capabilities of the land.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies to wooded areas where the removal of trees, stumps, brush, and other vegetation is needed in carrying out a soil and water conservation plan, and the land to be cleared will be used according to its capabilities.

**CRITERIA**

NRCS assistance will only be provided for land clearing activities involving agricultural land, in accordance with a Resource Management System conservation plan developed for the tract of land. The landowner is responsible for State or Local permits and approvals necessary for the land clearing operation.

A conservation plan shall be developed for the converted acres to the RMS level. Landowners should be made aware of "sodbust and swampbust" provisions of the Farm Bill. The plan shall specify the kinds of timber to be salvaged, lengths of logs, and place of stacking. Method of

disposal shall be specified for all material not salvaged. When a forester assists with planning, the Forestry Management Plan should be included with the case file information. Clearing and disposal methods shall be according to applicable state laws and with due regard to the safety of persons and property.

Since impacts from this practice can be significant, an environmental evaluation will be completed early in the planning process. Special emphasis will be placed on potential impacts to threatened and endangered species. Follow guidance in Section I (T & E Species) of the Virginia Field Office Technical Guide.

The cleared area shall be left in a neat and sightly condition that will facilitate the planned use and treatment of the land.

The plan shall provide for the measures necessary to protect the cleared area from erosion and adjacent areas from sediment, nutrients, and pesticides. The plan will not be considered complete until the converted landuse is established.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Special attention shall be given to maintaining, replacing, or improving habitat for fish and wildlife. Consideration of such things as strip clearing, leaving hedgerows and buffers, maintaining den and food trees, and creating additional woody habitat shall be explored.

Consider the effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff,

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evaporation, and transpiration.

The impact of soil settling on the variation in rates of runoff immediately after clearing should be assessed.

Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff should be considered.

## **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications for land clearing shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The cleared acreage will be maintained in its converted landuse according to provisions of the Conservation Plan.

## **REFERENCES**

1. NRCS, Virginia Field Office Technical Guide, Section III, RMS.
2. NRCS, Virginia Field Office Technical Guide, Section I, Threatened and Endangered Species, Virginia Policy and Location Maps.
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, Forestry BMP Manual.
4. GM-190, Part 410, Amendment VA4.
5. GM-190, Part 410 Amendment VA7, Threatened and Endangered Species.

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**LAND CLEARING  
Approved Practice Narrative  
(Acre)**

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460 D1 Land Clearing: Landuse conversion from woodland to open agricultural land in accordance with the conservation plan provided.

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